

Perception of Service Providers on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Kaduna State

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Abstract

Inclusive education which entails educating children with special needs alongside normal children within the same school setting is a global trend that Nigeria has keyed into. As many of the nation's states have begun implementing it, there is the need to ascertain the level of the perception of the stakeholders especially the Service Providers. Hence, the aim of this paper was to ascertain the level of the perception of the Service Providers in the study population with the objective to ascertain their perception level, and whether there was difference between them according to gender, local government area and public or private school. Data was generated by a set of questionnaire in order to provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses formulated and analyzed using the Descriptive Statistics and t-test. The findings revealed that the Service Providers had an average level of perception. In terms of the difference in implementation of inclusive education, none was established between the Service Providers of private and public primary schools nor between Kaduna North and Kaduna South local government areas. However, a difference in their perception according to gender was ascertained. The conclusion is that there was need to raise the level of the perception of the Service Providers for a more successful implementation of inclusive education in Kaduna state. Among the recommendations proffered was the need for an enhanced remuneration and working environment with enough resources for Service Providers as well as government, making provision for more training to educate them to know what to do better and when to do so for a more enhanced implementation of inclusive education in the State

Keywords: Inclusive Education 1, Perception 2, Service Providers 3,

Introduction

Inclusive Education is the concept of educating children with special needs alongside normal children within the same school setting which the National Policy on Education, collaborates in stating that every child has the right to education, disability notwithstanding as it provides equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It promotes the idea of integrating students

with special needs into regular classrooms and fostering an inclusive learning environment that goes beyond merely including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but encompasses the idea that every learner should be actively engaged and supported in their learning journey. The approach fosters an inclusive environment where each student feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. By embracing Inclusive Education practices, schools can create a positive learning atmosphere that celebrates diversity and encourages collaboration among students from different backgrounds. Furthermore, research has shown that Inclusive Education leads to improved academic outcomes for all students involved. By providing appropriate support systems and accommodations for diverse learners, it enhances overall educational quality while nurturing a sense of belonging among students.

Stakeholders, such as Service Providers' and school administrators are directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of Inclusive Education at both public and private primary schools, hence, their understanding and perception are paramount towards its successful implementation. Cornelius-Ukpepi&Opuwari, (2019) are of the view that the determinant of the implementation of Inclusive Education at the basic level includes information for planning, provision of school libraries, provision of qualified personnel and funding. They recommend that, government should provide infrastructural facilities and funds for effective implementation.

Inclusive Education is not just about ensuring access to education for all but also the means of creating an environment where every learner can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It is a powerful tool in fostering equality and shaping a more inclusive society for present and future generations. It can therefore not be overemphasized that Service Providers have a vital role to play in ensuring the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. Various policies geared towards Inclusive Education in Nigeria have been made but most of them have met various challenges probably because of the negligence of the non-inclusion of the Service Providers in the execution. Stakeholders, such as Service Providers' and school administrators are directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of Inclusive Education at both public and private primary schools, hence, their perception is paramount towards its successful implementation. Cornelius-Ukpepi & Opuwari, (2019) are of the view that the determinant of the implementation of Inclusive Education at the basic level includes information for planning, provision of school libraries, provision of qualified personnel and funding. They recommend that, government should provide infrastructural facilities and funds for effective implementation.

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Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the perception of Service Providers towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in Nigeria, ascertain who has more perception of Inclusive Education between the Service Providers of public and private primary schools with the view to establish the importance of Service Providers in the implementation of Inclusive Education in Nigeria.

Background of the Study

Inclusive Education is a transformative approach that aims to provide equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or circumstances. It promotes diversity, equity, and

inclusion within educational settings and recognizes the unique strengths and needs of every individual. It goes beyond merely including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms to encompass the idea that every learner should be actively engaged and supported in their learning journey. This approach fosters an inclusive environment where students feel valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. All learners in the same classrooms, in the same schools, is what is meant by Inclusive Education. It entails genuine educational possibilities for formerly excluded populations, including minority language speakers as well as children with disabilities. Inclusive Education allows students of all backgrounds to learn and grow side by side, to the benefit of all (UNICEF 2019). Although Inclusive Education is frequently connected with Children With Disabilities (CWD), its goal is to provide all children with a secure and supportive learning environment while taking into account their specific needs (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2020). As opposed to the segregated special education model, the move towards inclusive schooling was significantly influenced by the disability rights movement in the global North (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2009). The history of Inclusive Education can be traced back to the mid-20th century when there was a shift in how society viewed individuals with disabilities. Prior to that time, students with disabilities were excluded from mainstream schools and placed in separate institutions known as special schools.

There have been difficulties in offering truly Inclusive Education, despite the universal agreement that it is a measure to protect Children with Disabilities' (CWD) right to education which is particularly true in the Global South, where the absence of early childhood education initiatives, urban bias in service delivery, a lack of facilities and instructional resources, a lack of personnel with the necessary training, and bad infrastructure all work against inclusion (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2020).

In the realm of education, the various Service Providers are expected to play crucial roles in ensuring the smooth functioning of educational institutions and policy implementation. Service Providers include principals, teachers, and administrators. Together, such Service Providers could collaborate to create a conducive learning environment where all students could thrive academically, collectively and individually. The collective efforts of Service Providers could contribute towards shaping the future generation by providing quality education devoid of lowered expectations that results in disabilities being viewed only as intra-individual features which limits people's learning potentials. However, more equitable educational models for all kids start to take shape when carers, educators, family members, and other providers view disabilities as an intersection of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and intra-individual capacities.

Statement of the Problem and Justification of the Study

Many policies geared towards inclusive Education in Nigeria have been made but most of the policies have met various challenges probably because the perception of Service Providers towards inclusive Education were often overlooked. Moreover, school administrators may seem oblivious of the concept and implementation strategy of inclusive education, hence, by determining the perception of Service Providers towards its implementation their importance in the implementation of inclusive Education in Nigeria would be highlighted with relevant recommendations for improvement.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To evaluate the perceptions of Service Providers in the implementation of Inclusive Education.

- To compare perception of the implementation of Inclusive Education between Service Provider of public Schools and of private primary schools.

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide this research:

- What is the level of the perception of Service Providers towards the implementation of Inclusive Education?
- Does Service Providers' perception of the implementation of Inclusive Education differ between those of them in public primary schools and the others in private primary schools?

Research Hypotheses

- There is no significant gender difference between Service Provider perception of the implementation of inclusive education H_0
- There is no significant difference between the perception of Service Providers from Kaduna north and Kaduna south local Government on the implementation of inclusive education H_0

Purpose of the Study

Presently in Nigeria, many states have embraced the ideology of Inclusive Education and drafted the implementation guidelines for its implementation. Since, the guidelines require Service Providers to implement the policy, their perception of the ideology is crucial to either make or mar the implementation in schools, communities and Nigeria at large because Service Provider' positive perception could help in removing the barriers militating against its successful implementation relating to being attitudinal, educational, physical/environmental and institutional. A negative attitude is demonstrated by neglect, isolation and discrimination to educational services.

Significance of the Study

The impact of a successful implementation of inclusive Education would be felt by all students as participants and the multiplying effects thereafter by other stakeholders including the people with disabilities, researchers and the general public with government at all levels, families of the people with disabilities, other researchers and readers of Inclusive Education.

Methodology

The Study Area is Kaduna State in the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the 4th largest and 3rd most populous state in the country. Her slogan is "the center of learning". She is made up of twenty three local governments with three senatorial districts namely: Kaduna North Senatorial District, Kaduna South Senatorial District and Kaduna Central Senatorial District. The Descriptive Design was engaged to establish the opinion of Service Providers' perception towards the implementation of Inclusive Education from the population that included the Service Providers with administrators of both public and private primary schools. Thereafter engaging the Simple random sampling technique, two (2) local government areas of the state were selected because they are within the Kaduna metropolis and relatively safe for data collection. Then the proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique was engaged in the selection of schools with certain criteria such as space, staff strength, and year of existence, sound financial background and qualified personnel to obtain the Sample of the study. From the selected local government areas namely Kaduna North and Kaduna South, a total of fifty-three (53)

administrators of the seventy-seven (77) public primary schools in Kaduna North and Kaduna South local government areas and seventy-two (72) Private Primary Schools were selected representing 50% of the total population for the administration of a set of questionnaire (Perception Scale) developed by the researchers and earlier pilot tested which ascertained its validity, with a cronbach alpha of 0.79. The data obtained was analyzed using Descriptive Statistics and t-test. The decision rule for analyzing the perception scale for inclusive education was (0 – 1.7) as low perception, average perception is from (1.8 – 3.5) and high perception is carrying (3.6 – 5).

Data Presentation, Analysis and findings

Table1: Demographic Information of Respondents

		Count
Gender of respondent	male	64
	female	62
Type of School	private owned school	60
	Government owned school	16
Local government of School	Kaduna North Local Government	59
	Kaduna South Local Government	67
Highest educational qualification	Diploma	2
	NCE	27
	HND	80
	Masters	11
	PhD	6
Years of teaching experience	10 years to 20 Years	53
	20 years to 30 years	73

The total number of all the respondents was 126 with 64 males and 62 females comprising 59 from Kaduna North local government and 67 from Kaduna South Local Government area. The respondents with Diploma were 27, HND 80, 11 Masters Degree and PhD 6. The year of experience of those with working experience of 10 years to 20 years was 53 while those for between 20 years to 30 was 73.

Table 2: Mean Value Obtained from the Perception Scale

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Means	3.316	2.897	3.667	.770	1.266	.039	30

The table above indicates that the average mean of the perception of the 30 items of all the respondents was 3.316 with the minimum mean being 2.897 and the maximum was 3.667 while the range was 0.77

Table 3: Independent Sample Test of Perception According to Gender of Respondents

Levene Test for equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				
perception sum 1	F	Sig	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
								lower	upper
	.597	.441	1.079	124	.283	2.731	2.530	-2.278	7.740
			1.077	120	.284	2.731	2.536	-2.289	7.752

From this output there was a significant difference between the perception of Service Providers according to gender with the significant value of 1.079 for males and 1.077 for females while the significant difference was 0.284 from males and 0.283 from females. Hence we rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 4: Independent Sample Test of Perception According to Local Government of Respondents

Levene Test for equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				
perception sum 1	F	Sig	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
								lower	upper
	2.19	.141	1.792	124	.076	4.508	2.515	-.470	9.486
			1.777	116	.078	4.508	2.536	-.516	9.532

The table above indicates that the value for the perception of Service Providers according to Local Governments was 1.792 for Kaduna North and 1.77 for Kaduna South with a significant level of 0.076 for Kaduna North and 0.078 for Kaduna South, which indicates that there is no significant difference between the perception of Service Providers between Kaduna North and that of Kaduna South.

Findings from the study:

- There was an average perception of the implementation of inclusive education by Service Providers in both Kaduna South and Kaduna North Local Government Areas of Kaduna State even though Kaduna state government has a high standard for teachers. By implication an average perception indicates a positive attitude according to Smith, 2017&Forlin et al. (2017).
- There was no difference in the perception of the implementation of Inclusive Education between Service Providers of public primary schools and private primary schools.
- There was a difference in the perception of the implementation of inclusive Education between males and females probably due to the Nature of the genders and other factors such as culture, family background, education and years of teaching.
- There was no difference in the perception of Service Providers between Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local government areas of Kaduna State,

Conclusion

For a successful implementation of inclusive education, educational experts starting from the school

proprietors in the states and local government areas of Nigeria have a key responsibility which they can only optimally achieve with a high perception but as shown from the findings above, the Service Providers in the study area had only an average perception of the implementation of inclusive education, which means that the situation needs intervention for improvement to upscale their perception for the enhancement of the implementation so that all stake holders of the programme in the state, our society and world would reap its benefits.

Recommendations

- A positively high perception in the attitude of and chief among them are the Service Providers is required for the successful implementation of inclusive education in Kaduna state. We therefore recommend the following strategies for implementation:
- Since Service Providers' positive perception could help in removing the barriers militating against the successful implementation of Inclusive Education relating to being attitudinal, educational, environmental and institutional government should look into making sure they have adequate remuneration, resources and enough infrastructure.
- On the job training on the implementation of Inclusive Education should be organized by government to enable Service Providers know and take proactive actions in providing the needed supporting environment for all, particularly in both public and private primary schools in Kaduna State.
- There is need to review the curriculum of teacher training institutions to equip all teachers with the relevant knowledge and skills they require to also educate learners with special needs.
- There should be a proper sensitization by relevant government agencies for a better positive change in the attitude of stakeholders like teachers, students, school administrators, families and community towards the implementation of inclusive education in Kaduna state.
- Also all primary schools in both Kaduna South and Kaduna North local government should have an inclusive unit to create access to education and help the government obtain information on school age children with special needs.

Appendix

Appendix A Introductory letter from Kaduna Polytechnic to SUBEB

Appendix B Introductory letter from SUBEB to executive secretary of Kaduna North and South LG

Appendix C Perception Scale

Conflicts of Interest

This Research was sponsored by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) 2022\2023. The authors declared no conflict of interest and the results of the research was not influenced by the sponsors.

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